

Montana State Law and Administrative Rules for Gray Wolves as a Species in Need of Management



Private Citizens and Livestock

Montana law and administrative rules (MCA 87-3-130; ARM 12.9.1301-1305) allow a person to kill a wolf that is seen in the act of attacking, killing, or threatening to kill livestock:

- no permit is required and FWP should be notified within 72 hours
- preserve the scene and leave the carcass where it was killed; carcass is surrendered to FWP
- physical evidence of the wolf attack or that an attack was imminent is required (injured or dead livestock, broken fences, trampled vegetation and wolf sign) that would lead a reasonable person to conclude the attack was imminent
- wolves can not be intentionally baited, fed, or deliberately attracted

Wolves may be opportunistically hazed or harassed in a non-injurious manner anytime. Reporting to FWP within 72 hours is encouraged.

Livestock means cattle, calf, hog, pig, horse, mule, sheep, lamb, llama, goat, herding or guarding animals, rhea, emu, ostrich, donkey, and certain breeds of dogs commonly used for herding or guarding livestock.

Threatening to kill means the actual chasing, testing, molesting, harassing or livestock or livestock herding or guarding animals that would indicate to a reasonable person that an attack was imminent.

Attacking or killing means the actual biting, wounding, or grasping of livestock or domestic dogs.

Private Citizens and Domestic Dogs

Montana law and administrative rules (MCA 87-3-130; ARM 12.9.1301-1305) allow a person to kill a wolf that is seen in the act of attacking or killing a domestic dog not used for herding or guarding livestock. No permit is required, and FWP should be notified within 72 hours. The carcass is surrendered to FWP. Physical evidence of the wolf attack is required that would lead a reasonable person to conclude the attack was ongoing. A person may not intentionally bait a wolf with domestic dogs or livestock for the purpose of killing the wolf.

Wolves may be opportunistically hazed or harassed in a non-injurious manner. Reporting to FWP within 72 hours is encouraged.

Attacking or killing means the actual biting, wounding, or grasping of livestock or domestic dogs.



Private Citizens and Human Safety

Montana law and administrative rules (MCA 87-3-130; ARM 12.9.1301-1305) allow a person to kill a wolf that is seen in the act of attacking, killing, or threatening to kill a person. Report the incident to FWP within 72 hours.

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks has the primary responsibility to conserve and manage the wolf population under Montana's Nongame and Endangered Species Act (MCA 87-5-101 – 112). Montana law classifies the gray wolf as a state species in need of management. FWP works with private landowners to provide technical assistance on proactive ways to decrease the risk of wolf-caused losses.

FWP is responsible for decisions about how to address wolf-livestock conflict. FWP may authorize lethal wolf control after a livestock depredation is confirmed by USDA Wildlife Services. Lethal control of problem wolves can be authorized on an incremental, case by case basis when there are at least 15 breeding pairs in Montana and after considering a variety of factors. Lethal control efforts may occur for up to a total of 45 days from the date of confirmation. FWP may issue a special permit to a livestock owner to help resolve the conflict sooner.

FWP and USDA Wildlife Services actively work to reduce the potential for losses and to resolve wolf-livestock conflicts where and when they occur using a variety of non-lethal and lethal management tools. Both agencies also provide technical assistance to the Montana Livestock Loss Reduction and Mitigation Program.

USDA Wildlife Services

USDA Wildlife Services has the primary responsibility to investigate cases of suspected wolf depredation. Contact them if you suspect a wolf-caused loss and to request an investigation. USDA Wildlife Services also carries out both nonlethal and lethal control at the request of FWP.

Montana Livestock Loss Reduction and Mitigation Program

Montana's Livestock Loss Reduction & Mitigation Program was created to fulfill the compensation provisions of the Montana Gray Wolf Conservation and Management Plan. The program is administered through a 7-member, Governor-appointed citizen board and a program coordinator.

The purpose of this program is to acknowledge the importance of economic viability and sustainability of individual livestock owners who are negatively affected by wolf recovery. More specifically, the purpose of the Montana Livestock Loss Reduction and Mitigation Program is to:

- to proactively apply prevention tools and incentives to decrease the risk of wolf-caused losses
- to provide financial reimbursements to producers for wolf-caused losses based on program criteria.

Contact the program coordinator at 406-444-5609 to learn more.

See: www.fwp.mt.gov/wildthings/wolf to:

- read the Montana Wolf Weekly Report
- read the full Montana Gray Wolf Conservation and Management Annual Report
- report wolves and wolf sign that helps FWP monitor the population
- learn more about wolves and their management, state laws and rules, and the state program
- find contact information for FWP Wolf Program staff or USDA Wildlife Services personnel